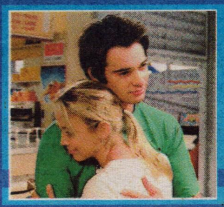
No 762 April 18, 2004

THE FUNDAY TIMES



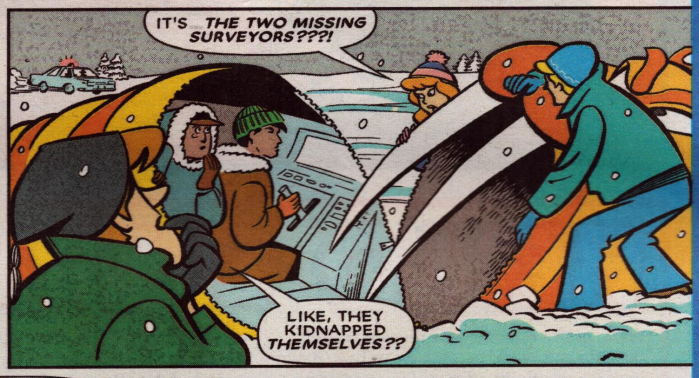
Trouble's back
Meet actor Daniel Collopy as Josh West returns to Summer Bay
Page 2

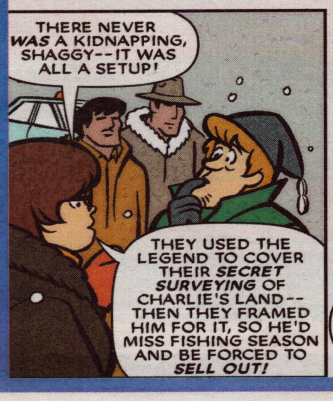
Screen idol
You could soon be writing on your PC screen if you win our cool prize
Page 8

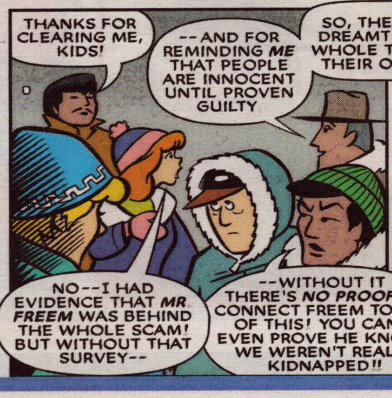
All change
Find out how Les Misérables moved to its new West End home
Page 9

SCOOBY-DOO! in THE CASE OF THE COLD TRAIL

The story so far – It's become apparent that the haunted oil field is just a scam, and the gang are about to expose it!







BACK IN THE BAY

Funday catches up with Home and Away star Daniel Collopy, whose character Josh West returns to Summer Bay this week

Hi Dan, we haven't seen you on our screens in a while. Why is that?
I've been busy setting up a clothes shop in Melbourne. I was lucky because the makers of Home and Away were happy to let me disappear for a while, then return to the show for one last storyline.

Are there any surprises coming up in the plot?
Without giving too much away, Josh returns to Summer Bay in a shiny new car after taking over the family banking business. He's even more of a rotter than before. He starts buying up lots of property in the bay and doing all sorts of shady deals, but the residents gang up against him.

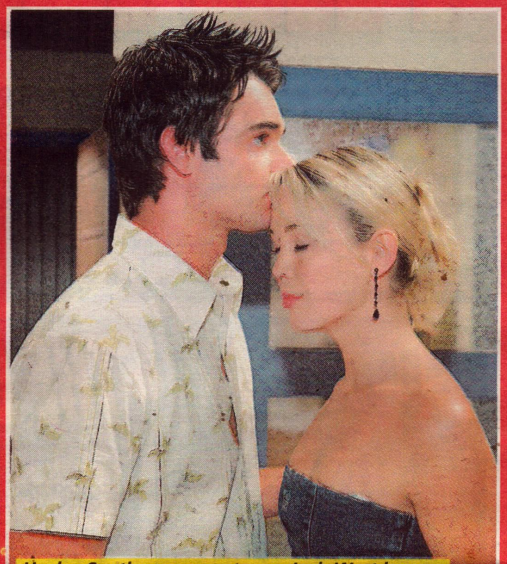
Do the actors play pranks on each other on set?
Oh sure. I always try to make the others laugh by pulling silly faces at them when they're trying to read their lines. Everyone on the show is professional, but some days you just have to let your hair down.

How do you stay healthy?
I don't have sugar, caffeine or ready meals. I eat a lot of fruit and I go to the gym.

Why is keeping fit so important?
It's simple, really. Exercise is good for the body and it also stimulates the brain. If you stay fit and eat well, you function much better. There's nothing wrong with sitting and playing computer games sometimes, but you also need to get outdoors.

When did you start exercising?
Because of the weather in Australia, kids are never indoors. A lot of homes have a swimming pool or tennis court or we go out skateboarding. I began playing cricket when I was young, then I got into athletics and basketball at school.

Do you ever slack off?
Only when I'm feeling unwell. At the moment I have flu but, as soon as I'm well, I'll be back at the gym and rollerblading or swimming.



Hayley Smith was sorry to see Josh West leave, but will he get a warm reception on his return?

Why are you leaving Home and Away?
I'm leaving because I want to concentrate on running the shop. We sell streetwear like jeans and T-shirts, some of which I design myself, and we're doing really well. Then, I'm going to try to land some film roles in Hollywood. In Australia, it's hard to be taken seriously as an actor once you've been on a soap opera, but in America nobody knows who I am.

We hear you're a good singer. Does a pop career beckon?
No way! That's just not one of my ambitions. They made me sing the Home and Away theme on TRL the other day and I was so embarrassed. I do sing, but I wouldn't want to do it professionally. I'm much happier acting.

Catch Daniel on Home and Away, weekdays at 6pm on Five, repeated at 12.30pm the following weekday, plus you can catch up with weekend omnibus, Saturdays at 7.55am

COVER CARTOON: SCOOBY-DOO AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © HANNA BARBERA (S04)

HELLO EVERYONE!

We've got an Aussie theme running through the issue this week, because we've been down under to talk to the stars of Home and Away and Neighbours. Above, you'll discover why Summer Bay rotter Josh West, played by Daniel Collopy, will soon be just a distant soap memory, and what Daniel plans to do once he quits the show for good.
On Ramsey Street, we spoke to Neighbours star Stephanie McIntosh, who plays Sky Mangel and new face on the close, Ben Nichols, who will appear for the first time on Wednesday, playing Scott Timmins. Stephanie reveals that Sky Mangel's problems of being bullied reflect her real life experiences at school. While Ben talks frankly about Scott's Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD] and how he uses his cousins to research his role.
As always, if you've got a point to make, write to F-mail this week [addresses on the right] – and if you e-mail us on funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk, you'll get something fun in your inbox in return ... seven jokes to keep you chuckling all week long!
Have a great week,

Dave
Dave, editor

THE FUNDAY TIMES

COMPETITIONS
Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU95 1AY or funday.comps@sunday-times.co.uk [only one e-mail per entrant please]
Competition deadline: April 28
Entrants to Funday competitions must be 16 and under.

F-MAIL
Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX or funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

NOT RECEIVED YOUR PRIZE?
Please telephone 020 7711 1521 or e-mail custserv@fundaytimes.co.uk

GOT A NEWS STORY?
Please telephone 020 7782 7415 or e-mail funday.news@sunday-times.co.uk

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7 DAYS

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD THIS WEEK

TODAY

The British Academy Television Awards take place in London. Coronation Street, The Bill, Casualty and Holby City are battling it out at the star-studded bash for the Continuing Drama award • MS Week begins, aiming to raise awareness of this disabling disease. On Friday a nationwide cake-selling event is taking place to raise funds • The world's first launderette opened 70 years ago in Fort Worth, USA

MONDAY

A joint Russian, US and European mission to the International Space Station blasts off. When the Soyuz spacecraft returns to Earth it will bring back British-born Michael Foale, who will have set a record for the longest time spent in space • It's the first day of International TV Turn-Off Week, when we're meant to do something else instead • New musical Jailhouse Rock opens in London, based on the classic 1957 Elvis Presley film

TUESDAY

A campaign launches to plant 250,000 trees. The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce [RSA] wants people to pledge new trees to make up for the number chopped down throughout the year • The New York Avignon Film Festival runs from today until April 25, showing American and French films

WEDNESDAY

Her Majesty the Queen is 78 today and there will be gun salutes at Green Park and the Tower of London. The Queen also has an official birthday on June 12 – double the prezzies! • BBC Two began transmitting 40 years ago. The first programme was Play School for children • The Royal New Zealand Ballet begins its UK tour in Manchester with a performance of Romeo and Juliet

THURSDAY

It's the fourth annual Earth Car Free Day, encouraging people to find different ways to get around • The Harrogate Spring Flower Show begins – look out for the impressive daffodil and tulip marquee

FRIDAY

It's St George's Day – the national day of England. Famous for his dragon-slaying, George also became patron saint of Venice, Portugal and Catalonia • "Cry god for Harry, England and Saint George," wrote William Shakespeare in his play, Henry V. And it's the bard's birthday too – he was born 440 years ago. He also died on this day in 1616

SATURDAY

Camborne Trevithick Day is a one-day festival celebrating the industrial history of this Cornish town. There are dances, steam engines, choirs – and 30,000 visitors • World Laboratory Animal Day is highlighting the suffering of animals in laboratories • Prince Johan Friso [above], second son of the Queen of the Netherlands, is getting married. But because the Dutch government does not approve of his choice of bride, he has had to give up his claim to the throne

NEWS

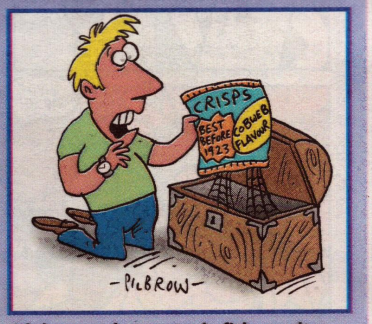
WORTH THE WEIGHT

There was a new arrival at Whipsnade Animal Park last month – an Asian elephant calf. But after a pregnancy lasting 21 months, nobody was more interested than mum Kaylee to see her daughter. The baby elephant, who has not yet been named, weighed a jumbo-sized 149kg when she was born. That's 58kg more than the average birth weight of a captive Asian calf! She is just under 1m tall and covered with fluffy hair. She was able to stand about 10 minutes after birth but it's taken a bit longer for her to learn how to control her trunk. For the first few days, she was only able to wave it in the air... or trip on it!

PICTURE PERFECT

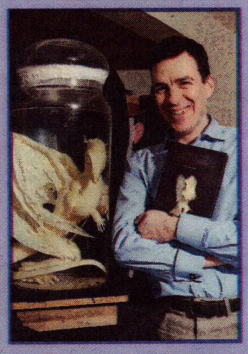
A world record was set last week for the world's largest paint-by-numbers masterpiece. Great Ormond Street Hospital and chocolate company Lindt teamed up with Art Attack's Neil Buchanan, who designed the epic picture. It covered 400m² – that's larger than two tennis courts! Luckily, the event turned out to be a big draw for young artists. Hundreds of children, including many ex-patients from Great Ormond Street were armed with paint brushes and quickly got to work adding some colour. And thanks to a police helicopter taking an aerial photograph, everyone can get to see the big picture!

OLD SALT



When James Smith from London bought a secondhand chest he had no idea what would be inside. Although there wasn't any hidden treasure, it did contain something unusual – an 82-year-old packet of crisps, which spookily had James' surname on it! The packet of Smith's Crisps dates from around 1922 and even contains the original salt twist to add to the snack. Instructions on the packet recommend munching them with bacon, chops, steak, fish, poultry or game. But James won't be following the advice. "I was delighted with the find, but I wouldn't fancy eating the crisps!" he chuckles.

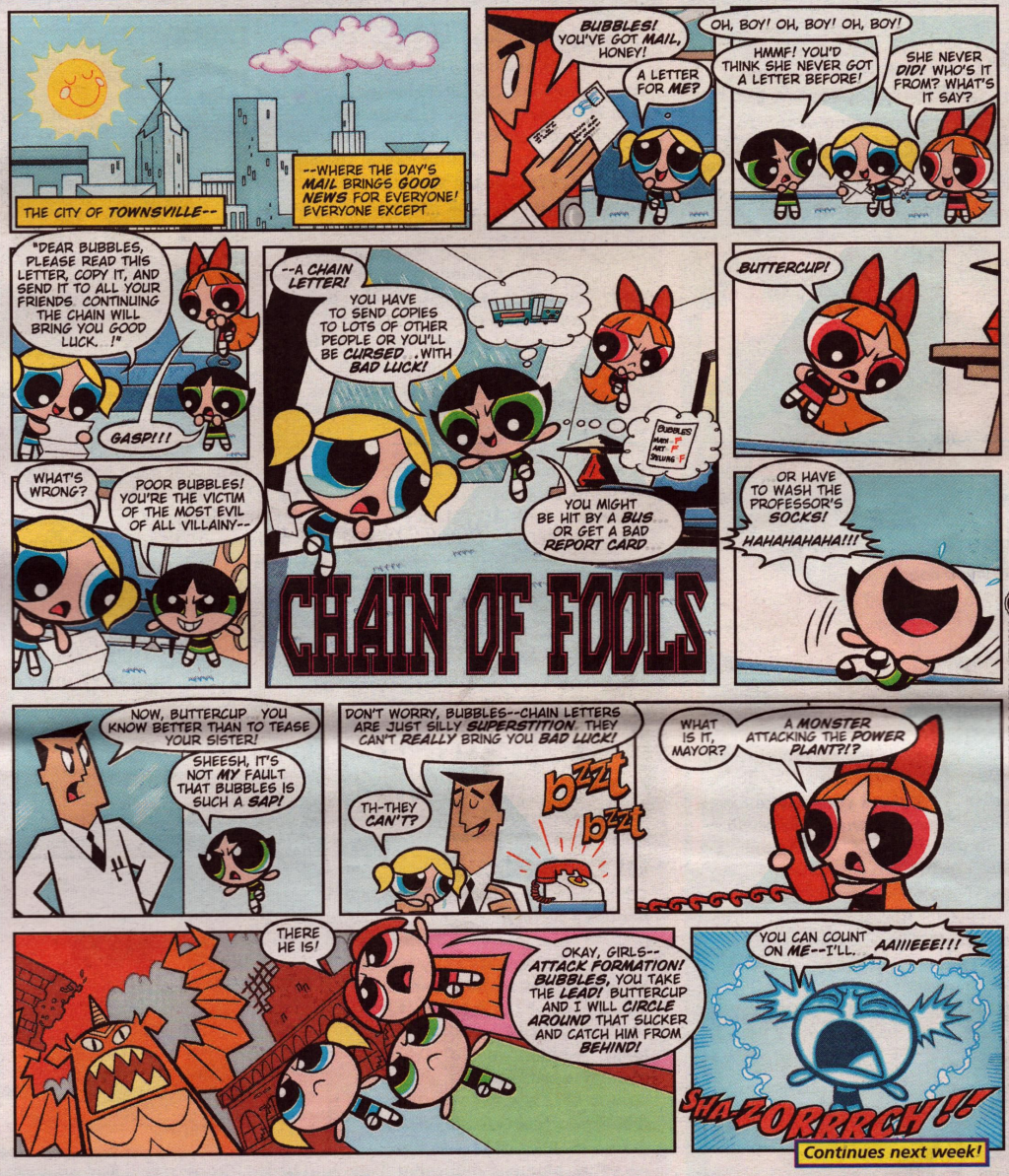
DRAGON DUPE



Do you remember the story about the preserved body of a dead dragon from Funday issue 752? Allistair Mitchell, who claimed his friend had discovered it, now admits the animal is a fake. Allistair had written a novel about dragons helping humans to save the world but was unable to get it published. To create interest, he asked Crawley Creatures, the model makers who worked on TV's Walking With Dinosaurs, to make him a fake dragon. The bizarre beast quickly became hot news and Allistair's book, Unearthly History, will now be taking pride of place in Waterstone's book stores!

PICTURES PA/KEN LENNOX/STEFAN ROUSSEAU/OWEN HUMPHREYS AP/LAURENT REBOURS EPA, REUTERS/MOLLY RILEY AFP/MAXIM MARMUR, THE BRITISH ACADEMY AWARD IS BASED ON A DESIGN BY MITZI CUNLIFFE WITH/KENNETH WATKINS

THE POWERPUFF GIRLS — CHAIN OF FOOLS



THE POWERPUFF GIRLS AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © CARTOON NETWORK (S04)

WORDWISE

....PREFIXES: SCIENCE....

A **prefix** is a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to make a new one. If you see a word for the first time and it contains a prefix you know, you can make an educated guess about what the new word means. Here are some handy examples that you'll see everywhere once you look out for them!

astro-
PREFIX "Astro-" means involving the stars and planets. For example, *astronomy* is the scientific study of the stars and planets.
HISTORY: from Greek *astron* meaning "a star"

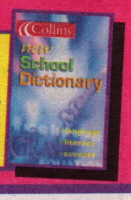
bio-
PREFIX "Bio-" means "life" or "living things". For example, *biology* is the study of living things.
HISTORY: from Greek *bios* meaning "life"

eco-
PREFIX Words beginning with "eco-" have something to do with ecology or the environment.
HISTORY: from Greek *oikos* meaning "environment"

geo-
PREFIX "Geo-" means "earth"
EG *geography...geologist.*
HISTORY: from Greek *g_* meaning "earth"

hydro-
PREFIX "Hydro-" means "water". For example, *hydroelectricity* is electricity made using water power.
HISTORY: from Greek *hud_r* meaning "water"

Taken from Collins New School English Dictionary [2nd Edition, ISBN 0-00-712636-0, paperback £5 99]



f-mail

FANTASTIC FANTASY

Jim Henson has had a hand in many fabulous films and TV shows. An array of these are out this month to own on DVD, including The Muppets [cert U] starring Kermit, Miss Piggy and Gonzo the Great. The Storyteller 1 and 2 [cert U] is packed with amazing tales and Dark Crystal [cert PG] features a quest to bring order to a world of chaos. Thanks to Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, the star f-mailer will receive all four DVDs and a pukka Picot DVD player on which to watch them. The other f-mailers can each choose two DVDs from the four titles.

STAR

Dear f-mail,
There is so much racism in the world today and it causes so much trouble. Where I live, there are huge fights between Muslims and Christians. Many people have been killed and injured by these gang wars and yet it is still happening even though people see the suffering right in front of them. I wish all people could live together like me, my friends are Sikhs, Christians and many other religions.
Waqas Ali, 12, Glasgow

Mia Gregory, 13, Oxshott

DOWN ON RAMSEY ST

Adam Tanswell meets Neighbours star Stephanie McIntosh, and new face on the close, Ben Nichols, who plays Scott Timmins

Stephanie McIntosh plays Sky Mangel

Sky's been bullied on the show. Are those scenes tough to film?

That storyline is the best because I get to really rip an emotion out. Sky's continuously getting bullied, but a lot of it is to do with being the new girl at school.

Have you been bullied in real life?

Yes, when I was younger and moving schools, I definitely copped it from others. There was a group of friends who were already established and trying to jump in was kind of like swimming in the deep end of a swimming pool – you either sink or swim.

What did the bullies do to you?

For me, it was an isolation thing. There was this one girl who didn't want to accept me into the group of friends. She didn't really call me names or anything, she just used to ignore me.

How did you cope?

I talked to my friends about how I felt and we went to see the school counsellor about it. Eventually we all went on to confront the girl about how she was making us feel, which made her really embarrassed and the bullying stopped.

What's your advice for someone who's being bullied?

The worst thing you can do is bottle it up, so tell someone about it. Talk to anyone you trust – a friend, a parent, a sister, a teacher ... but don't suffer in silence. You are definitely not alone.

If you're being bullied, you can talk to someone free and in confidence at ChildLine on 0800 1111

Ben Nichols plays Scott Timmins

Tell us about your character.

My character is Toadfish's cousin and he's a loveable rogue. Scott's a cheeky chappie with heaps of energy and he's always doing mad stuff like jumping into pools on bikes. He's a crazy guy!

Is Scott similar to you in real life?

He's a fun character to play and I'm cheeky like he is. I've got a fair bit of energy too, but he's a bit more hyperactive because he's got a disorder called ADHD.

What's ADHD?

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It's a problem where you have trouble controlling yourself – and your attention span is quite limited. He speaks and acts before he thinks, has loads of energy and finds it hard to relax.

How did you research that?

I have a couple of cousins with ADHD so I knew a lot about it already. The writers have also helped me out by pointing me in the right direction with certain scenes.

Do people with ADHD go to regular schools?

Yes, although there are special schools around. Scott goes to a regular school though, Erinsborough High. He's pretty smart – he just finds it hard to concentrate. People with ADHD are no less intelligent than others – they're often more artistic.

Is it hard to act like someone with ADHD?

You have to have so much energy. Even if Scott's sitting, he can't sit still and quietly – he's always tapping his fingers, moving his legs or fidgeting somehow. He exhausts me!

What's the most difficult thing about playing Scott?

He talks really fast, which is tough sometimes. It's difficult to say my lines quickly and keep them understandable. It's especially tough in the mornings – it takes me a while to wake up and get into the character.

PICTURES ©FREMANTLE MEDIA, ©BBC

Dear f-mail,
I disagree with Mike Read's e-mail [issue 755]. I think that unhealthy foods such as crisps, chips and burgers should be banned from being sold in schools. The more people are given a choice, the more unhealthy foods they will choose to eat. There is nothing wrong with healthy foods like fruit and salads, they taste lovely. I think the government should only put the unhealthy foods in schools on one day each week and make the healthier options cheaper. Do any other readers agree?
Laura Cobb, via e-mail

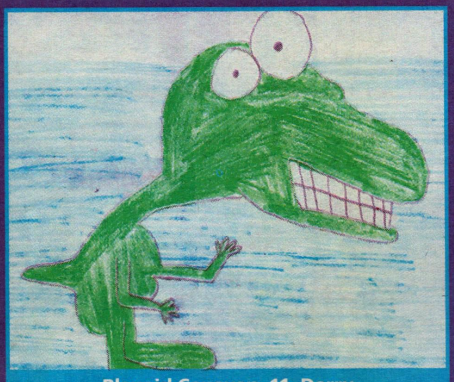
Haseeb Maz, 10, Gerrards Cross

Why did the Hedgehog cross the road?
To meet his flatmate!

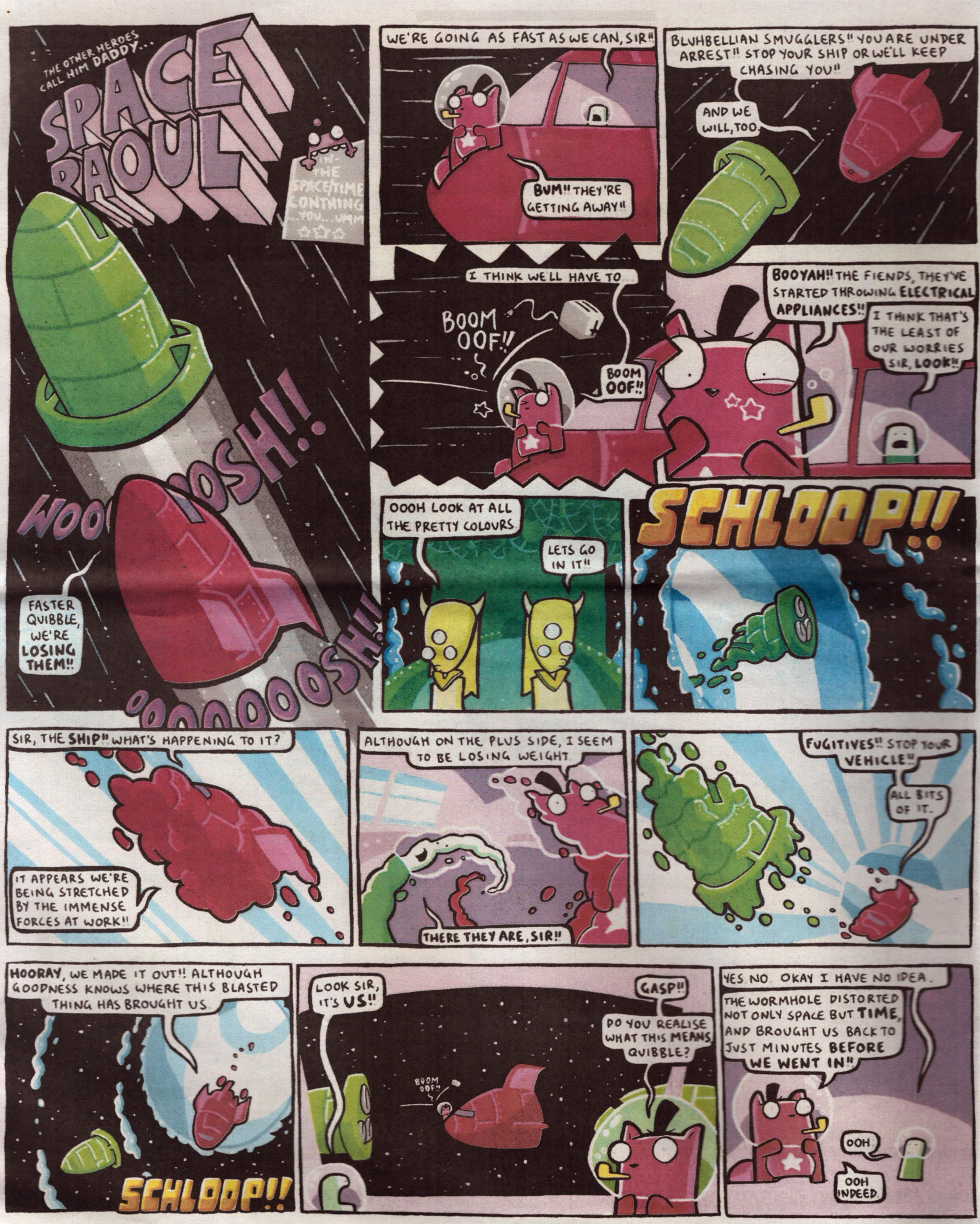
What are the three rings of marriage?
Engagement ring, wedding ring and suffering!

Why was 6 afraid of 7?
Because 7, 8, 9!

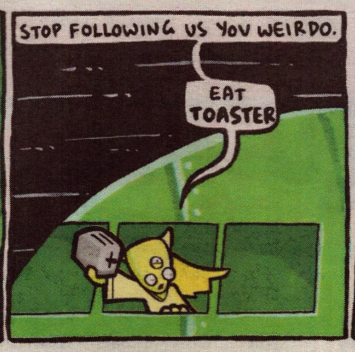
Andrea de Costa, 13, Hammerwich

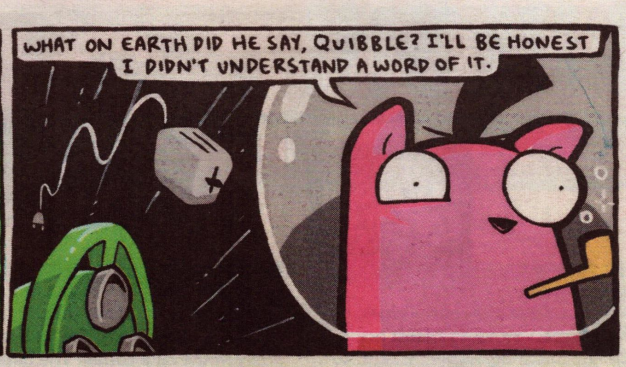

Blanaid Canavan, 11, Derry

What's your favourite soap? E-mail Funday and let us know!

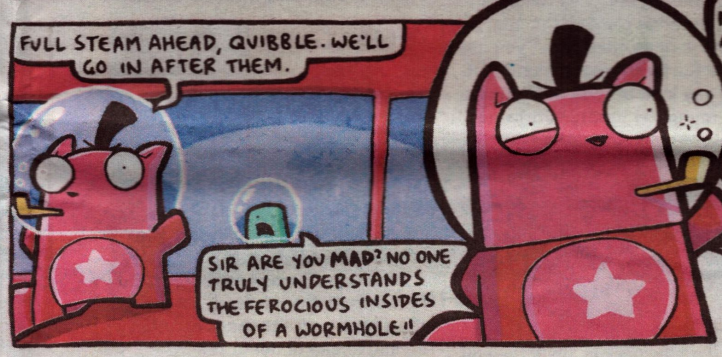

THE OTHER HEROES CALL HIM DADDY...
SPACE PAOULI
IN THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM ...YOU...UMM
WOOOOOSH!!
FASTER QUIBBLE, WE'RE LOSING THEM!!
WE'RE GOING AS FAST AS WE CAN, SIR!!
BUM!! THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!!
BLUHBELLIAN SMUGGLERS!! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!! STOP YOUR SHIP OR WE'LL KEEP CHASING YOU!!
AND WE WILL, TOO.
I THINK WE'LL HAVE TO
BOOM OOF!!
BOOM OOF!!
BOOYAH!! THE FIENDS, THEY'VE STARTED THROWING ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES!!
I THINK THAT'S THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES SIR, LOOK!!
OOOH LOOK AT ALL THE PRETTY COLOURS
LETS GO IN IT!!
SCHLOOP!!
SIR, THE SHIP!! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO IT?
IT APPEARS WE'RE BEING STRETCHED BY THE IMMENSE FORCES AT WORK!!
ALTHOUGH ON THE PLUS SIDE, I SEEM TO BE LOSING WEIGHT
THERE THEY ARE, SIR!!
FUGITIVES!! STOP YOUR VEHICLE!!
ALL BITS OF IT.
HOORAY, WE MADE IT OUT!! ALTHOUGH GOODNESS KNOWS WHERE THIS BLASTED THING HAS BROUGHT US
SCHLOOP!!
LOOK SIR, IT'S US!!
BOOM OOF!!
GASP!!
DO YOU REALISE WHAT THIS MEANS QUIBBLE?
YES NO OKAY I HAVE NO IDEA.
THE WORMHOLE DISTORTED NOT ONLY SPACE BUT TIME, AND BROUGHT US BACK TO JUST MINUTES BEFORE WE WENT IN!!
OOH
OOH INDEED

WHAT DID HE SAY?
I DON'T KNOW, HE WASN'T TALKING OUR WEIRD ALIEN LANGUAGE.
THROW SOMETHING AT HIM.


STOP FOLLOWING US YOU WEIRDO.
EAT TOASTER

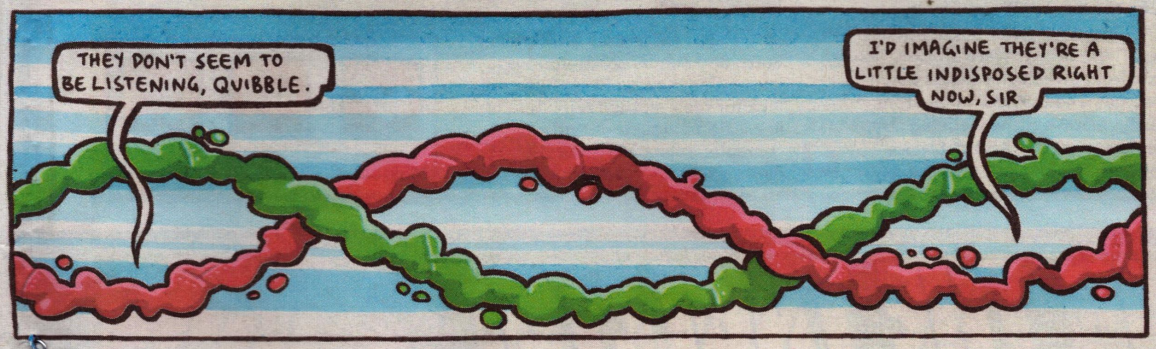

WHAT ON EARTH DID HE SAY, QUIBBLE? I'LL BE HONEST I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD OF IT.

GOOD GRIEF, THEY'RE ESCAPING RIGHT INTO A WORMHOLE!! THEY MUST BE EXPERIENCED SPACE TRAVELLERS TO ATTEMPT SUCH A RISKY MANOEUVRE!!

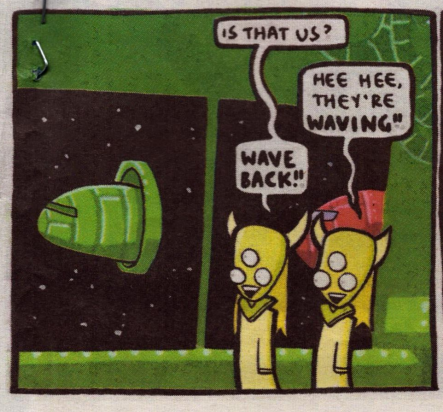

FULL STEAM AHEAD, QUIBBLE. WE'LL GO IN AFTER THEM.
SIR ARE YOU MAD? NO ONE TRULY UNDERSTANDS THE FEROCIOUS INSIDES OF A WORMHOLE!!

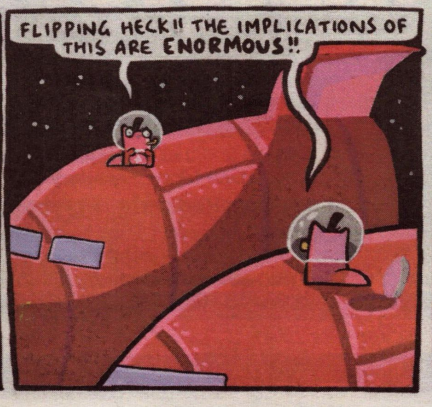
NONSENSE QUIBBLE, WE ARE NOT ONLY EXPLORERS SEARCHING FOR NEW DISCOVERIES, WE ARE FIGHTERS FOR GOOD, COMMITTED TO PURSUE EVIL WHEREVER IT MAY...
OOH GOOD POINT, I SHOULD GET BACK IN THE SHIP.

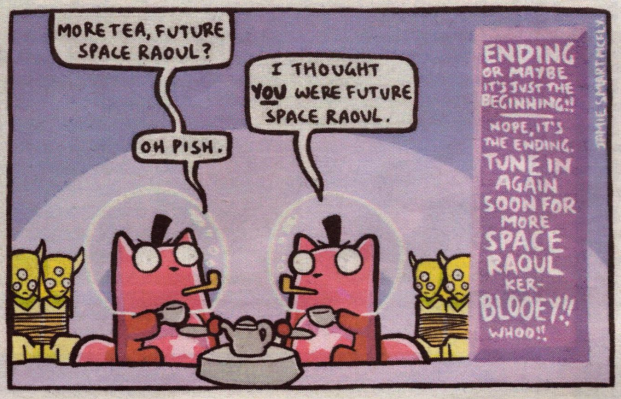
SCHLOOP!!
PRAY WE DON'T GET ROYALLY SPAGHETTIFIED, QUIBBLE.


THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE LISTENING, QUIBBLE.
I'D IMAGINE THEY'RE A LITTLE INDISPOSED RIGHT NOW, SIR.

SCHLOOP!!

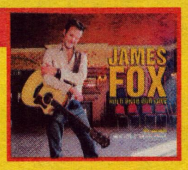

IS THAT US?
HEE HEE, THEY'RE WAVING!!
WAVE BACK!!


FLIPPING HECK!! THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ARE ENORMOUS!!


MORE TEA, FUTURE SPACE RAOUL?
OH PISH.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE FUTURE SPACE RAOUL.
ENDING
OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING!!
NOPE, IT'S THE ENDING.
TUNE IN AGAIN SOON FOR MORE SPACE RAOUL
KER-BLOOEY!!
WHOO!!
JAMIE SMART 2009

FRESH! THIS WEEK

SINGLE



HOLD ON TO OUR LOVE
James Fox

James never found favour with the Fame Academy judges, he was written off as a cabaret act. But Mr Fox has a legion of fans, and so this country-tinged soft rocking love song should see him finally enter the charts and, next month, James takes this track to Eurovision. It's a real grower and it shows off James's talent for conveying emotion through his singing.

TOY

FUR REAL NEWBORNS

The Fur Reals range of realistic animated creatures treads a fine line between cuteness and creepiness. But with these Newborns, the balance is firmly in the cute corner. The baby puppies are very sleepy when you get them out of their packaging, so they need to be woken up gently. After a little stroking they begin to move and then open their eyes. Plus, the more you play with them, the more they react. The pups come in a choice of three colours and each has its own adoption certificate.

WEB

PLEASURELAND UK.COM

The pulsing minarets and sunset colours hint that we're off to Agrabah with Alladin ... in fact, we're off to Pleasureland in Southport, but you can visit Abdullah's Dilemma, a hall of illusions. The park boasts cool coasters like the suspended, looping Trauma-Tizer and the Cyclone. The site has an interactive map, embedded with ride info [including disabled access], pictures and VR 360° views.

GAME

NAMCO CLASSICS PLUG & PLAY TV GAMES

Just plug this unit into your TV and you're off on a retro time warp, back to an era of computer gaming that your parents will remember fondly. Hold on a minute? If mum and dad loved it so much, doesn't that mean it's really uncool? Well, yes. Games like Pac-Man, Galaxian and Rally-X are great fun for grown ups who played them when they were the only ones around, but in today's high-tech world, they look somewhat dated.

FILM

WONDROUS OBLIVION

The tagline sums up this heartwarming film well, "a wide-eyed boy in a narrow-minded world". David has cricketing dreams and when a Jamaican family move in next door and build a cricket net in their garden, David makes friends and begins practising with them. Before long, prejudice makes the lives of both families difficult, and friendships are put to the test.

THEATRE

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

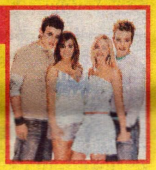
Ever seen Joseph? If not, now's the time to get along and see it. The show has survived because the story is historic, the tunes are addictive and the lyrics are very funny. Steps star Ian "H" Watkins recently took over the title role in this colourful West End version [at the New London Theatre], bringing fresh vitality to the role, an impressive vocal performance and his trademark cheeky humour.

TOY

FORMULA FUELERS

These new bikes and cars from Hot Wheels run on fizzy drinks! Well, they run on a battery, but they come with a fuel tank, and various mixers that you use to create the best formula blend. You can use any kind of soda or fruit juice, but we found the best results came from tap water, beating the Sprite-powered bike to the line!

WEB



POPOFFICIAL.COM

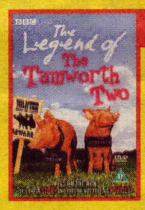
Still waiting for the new Steps? Maybe POP! are going to fit the bill. POP! are Hannah, Glenn, Jade and Jamie, and on their new website you can find out all about the group. In the vital stats section, Glenn gets a raspberry for describing himself as cool, which is so uncool! But this fresh act get full marks for a slick site that's up and running ahead of debut release, Heaven and Earth, next month.

WATCH

POWER PUFF GIRLS WATCH

The Swatch brand usually means funky watches at pocket-money prices. These new Power Puff Girls Flik-Flak watch, from Swatch, let things down somewhat. The casing is made from colourful metal but the webbing strap looks cheap and feels scratchy. And at £18.95, even the Power Puff Girls can't save the day!

DVD



THE LEGEND OF THE TAMWORTH TWO

When the Tamworth Two escaped from a Wiltshire abattoir back in 1998, they hit the headlines. This film follows the events surrounding Butch and Sundance's notorious journey, as they avoid capture and look for their mother. A mixture of live action pig footage and computer animation make this film a sweet and sow-er hit!

GOOD | OK | BAD

WIN IT!

TAKING THE TABLETS!

It's the 13th year of Tesco Computers for Schools. Since it began in 1992, more than £84million worth of equipment has been delivered to schools. That includes a staggering 52,000 computers – plus plenty more hardware and learning software.

Nearly 30,000 schools have registered, that's 86% of UK schools.

If yours hasn't, it's not too late. Click on www.tesco.com/schools to find out more about how to collect vouchers which can be swapped for loads of awesome equipment. Thanks to Tesco and RM, one lucky Funday reader will win a fantastic tablet PC to use at home plus one RM Student Tablet PC for their school. A keyboard and mouse isn't needed to operate these state-of-the-art PCs. Instead the user just moves a sleek stylus to write and control the cursor!

To enter, tell us what the letters RAM stand for on a memory chip.

Mark your entry COMPUTER and send it with your name, age, address and home telephone number, to the competition address on page 2.

RM 30 years in Education

A MOVING TALE

Les Misérables moved last week from the Palace Theatre in London. James Powell, associate director of the epic musical, explains how the barricades came down and were re-created a week later at the Queen's Theatre

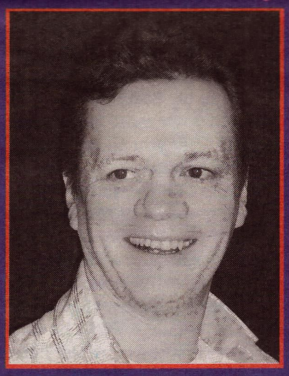
How long did it take to plan the move of Les Misérables?
It took months. Once a decision was made to move the production, we then had to look at the scheduling. The dates and times and the availability of everybody involved had to be taken into consideration. Everything was scrutinised and looked at, and as soon as the nod was given it was a case of all hands on deck. We are fortunate that we didn't have to recast, we're taking our existing cast to the Queen's Theatre.

What have been the biggest obstacles for the cast to overcome?
The space is very different, the relationship to the audience and the set is very different, and the sound is very different, so all of that is alien territory to them. Playing in one theatre at night and rehearsing in another during the day is also difficult for them. They have been doing that for three weeks.

What practical problems have you faced?
The main issues are the brand new sound system and the backstage traffic. On a show of this nature, the backstage traffic is terribly complicated and it was something that was invented 19 years ago. So, until now, everybody who has gone into the show hasn't had to learn it because the people backstage were already familiar with it. But now, everybody has had to re-learn these things, so while everything on stage is fairly familiar, everything backstage is not.

Will the set look different?
It's a brand new set, but there hasn't been much compromise. It's pretty much the same and you'd recognise it instantly. But the subtleties of John Napier's set let it sit in the house so well and adapt to the new space beautifully.

What about the props?
The furniture has been redesigned to fit the new space, it's all brand new.



Even the fake food that participants in the Les Miz Kids Club enjoy playing with?
Okay, no, the food remains the same but there has been a noticeable change but I won't tell you what it is. I think it's exciting for people to discover these things for themselves.

Will real fans notice the changes?
There are some very visible changes, and some subtle changes too. But the beauty of Les Misérables is that you have always been able to revisit it and discover new things. It's forever remoulding itself. Of course, the intention has been to improve on a standard of excellence that has been laid down since the start.

Are the cast and crew excited to be re-creating the show?
There is a vibrancy and feel about it that is having an impact on the show, and while it has always had a real intensity to it, that seems more tangible in this new space. It could be because there is a different dynamic in the new theatre. It's a thrilling time, and I think we'll look back and think of this as an historical move in musical theatre.

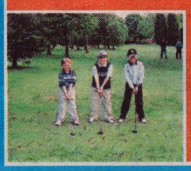
Les Misérables is at the Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London. For more info, click on www.lesmis.com

The Miz Kids Club at the Queen's Theatre begins on May 1. There will be three clubs per month, the first and fourth Saturdays for 8- to 11-year-olds [10.45am-1.15pm] and the third Saturday for 12- to 15-year-olds [10.30am-1.15pm]. For details, call 0870 850 9171 or e-mail education@camack.co.uk

PICTURES: MICHAEL LE POER TRENCH/©CAMERON MACKINTOSH LTD

JOIN THE CLUBS!

Have you got what it takes to sink a hole in one? Now you can give golf a go, thanks to the Marriott Junior Golf Programme, in partnership with the Golf Foundation. Each six-session course costs £20 and includes tuition from one of Marriott's PGA professionals. Lessons include putting and chipping and it doesn't matter if you can't tell one club from another – the course is aimed at beginners.



Thanks to Marriott Hotels, one lucky Funday reader can practise their swing in style. Up for grabs is a place on the Marriott Junior Golf Programme, a set of Dunlop junior clubs and 72 golf balls. This prize includes a two-night break for two children and two adults at one of the Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs across the country plus dinner and two rounds of golf for the adults.

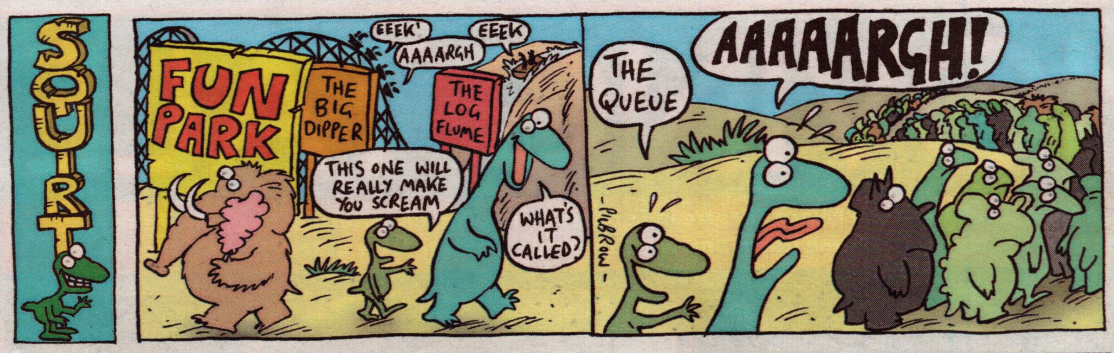
To enter, tell us who won the US Masters last week.

Mark your entry GOLF and send it with your name, age, address and home telephone number, to the competition address on page 2.

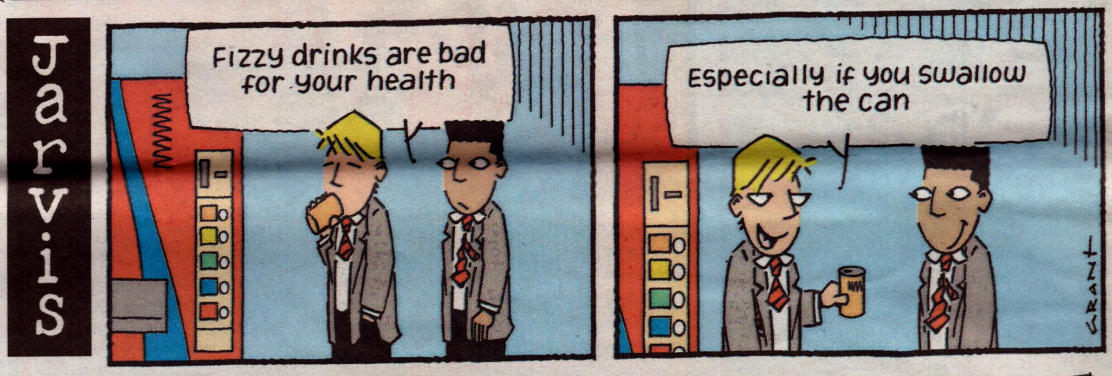
Marriott. HOTELS & RESORTS

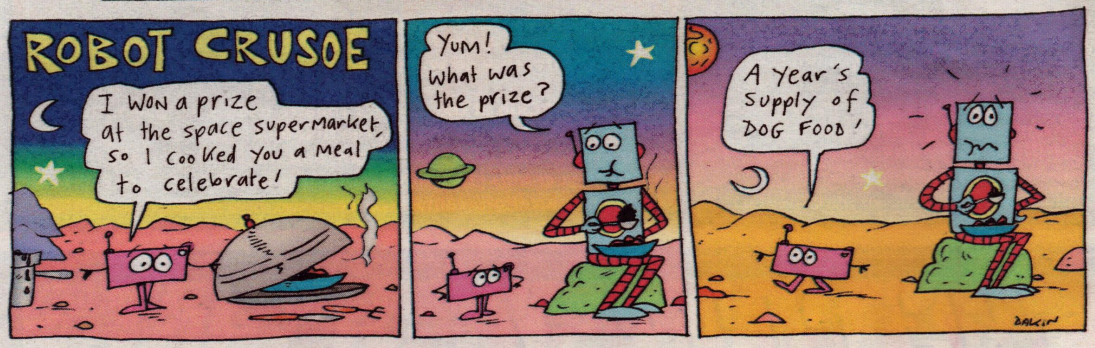
Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

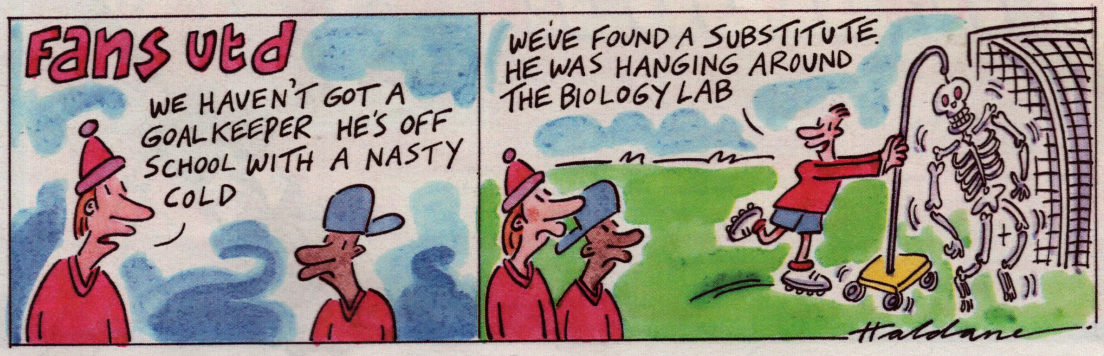
Funday brings you another exciting West End story next week!



ADVANCE FEATURES







QF QUICKFIRE

JAMES FOX

How tidy was your room when you left this morning?
Very - I'm a good boy, I always tidy my room!

What CD is on your player right now?
The Man Who by Travis

Which TV programmes do you catch if you can?
I can't remember the last time I got the chance to sit down and watch any television. Probably EastEnders.

Who's the most intriguing celebrity you have ever met and why?
I'd say Ronan Keating, but it's more a case of respect than intrigue. He's such a down to earth, approachable guy, and talented to boot!

What's your secret geeky thing?
That would have to be that I'm very house proud. I know it's quite boring but I'm afraid it's true!

What have you been putting off doing recently that you really ought to get on with?
Paying my household bills. Seriously, I'm so bad, I reckon I'll be getting a court summons soon.

When are you happiest?
When I'm on stage

What's your motto for life?
Bring it on!!

Hold On To Our Love by James Fox is released tomorrow.
James will represent the UK with this song at the Eurovision Song Contest in Turkey next month

CLASSICAL CHAT

Funday catches up with classical duo Duel – that's Craig Owen and Greg Black – who recently enjoyed a number-one album

Craig, were you forced to learn the violin by your mother since she was a violin teacher?
Craig: I was surrounded by violins in the house but my mum didn't put any pressure on me. She gave me a violin to play and showed me how to play. Free lessons were very handy.
Greg: My mum used to be a dancer so there always used to be music around the house and I think that's what started my love of music but I started to learn the violin at school.
How much practising does it take to stay on top form?
Craig: You have to be dedicated. At the moment, we've been playing at least six hours each day. There is a lot of hard work involved.
Greg, you were part of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Do you still play with them?
Greg: I love playing with them but I am too busy with Duel at the moment. I love playing with orchestras but it is rather like being a cog in a large wheel. So, it's great to be the two front guys for a change. You also have to be so well behaved in an orchestra and it's good that we get to go a bit mad when we're on stage as Duel.
Craig: We've always believed in communicating with the audience and we have worked at choreographing our show. You have to be exciting because classical music can be a bit static.
Are there any pop tunes you'd like to give a violin makeover to?
Greg: There are loads actually ... Daniel Bedingfield's If You're Not The One and Christina Aguilera's Beautiful. Lyrical songs like that could work really well.

Craig Owen and Greg Black

What's the ultimate dream for you now?
Greg: After we toured with Atomic Kitten in February, we're hoping to sell out massive arena tours by ourselves.
Craig: We're also hoping to travel with the music too – go to America, Asia – all over, and take our music to the world!

GEMMA'S STORY

North London lass Gemma Fox is one of the coolest new girls on the music scene. Funday got the lowdown on the 24-year-old's quirky singing style

What were you doing before you got your record deal?
I'm a mum to a six year old, so I was looking after my daughter, and I was also always working on music. I worked in studios a lot, and I'd go to clubs and get on the mike and get myself heard. I also worked in a solicitors during the day to make money.
Did you ever consider going on Pop Idol when you were trying to make it?
No. I think those types of shows are good, but they're not right for someone like me. I like to write my own stuff and decide what I'm doing myself. I think that sometimes people in those shows are told what to do, but I like to dress how I want to and be myself at all times.
Do you rate any of the artists that have come out of those shows?
My daughter and I both really rate Lemar. My little girl loves him. We met him once and she was so embarrassed, but he was so nice to her.
Tell us about your single, Girlfriend.
Girlfriend features MC Lyte and the track is about domestic violence. It's something that I've been through and some of my friends have been through, and we've been working with a charity that Dawn French set up called Women's Aid.

Was it tough writing about your experiences?
Not really because I think it's better to have these things out in the open. Everything I've been through has made me into who I am now, so I don't regret anything.
How would you describe your sound?
I think I have my own sound that's a real mixture. I'm just Gemma Fox.
Gemma's debut single, Girlfriend, is released on April 26

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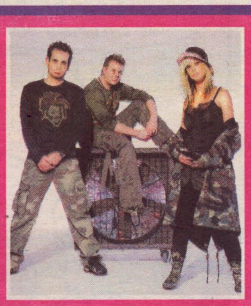
CHRISTINA'S NO NO

Evi from dance music hit makers Lasgo reveals why meeting Christina Aguilera was a huge let down

It's been eighteen months since your last single, Pray. What have you and the boys been up to?
We had a couple of hits in America so we've been touring over there. We did some festivals and got to meet Craig David, Shaggy and Christina Aguilera.
What was Christina Aguilera like?
I was a bit disappointed. We were walking around backstage getting autographs from all the big stars that were there, and the only person who said no was Christina. But I don't think it's her fault. I think the people around her try to protect her.
As the lead singer, are you involved in the writing of the songs?
Peter and Dave come up with the tune and Dave writes the lyrics. Sometimes I help him when he makes mistakes with his English words.
When do you know when a song is going to be a hit?
I don't! With our first single, Something, I didn't think it would be successful, and then it became a big hit. Now the boys release the song they think is going to do well and they're always right.



Do you dance around in the studio when recording a track?
No, I concentrate on getting the emotion of the song right.
Would you like to try other styles as well as dance music?
Eventually, yes. I'd love to sing rock music.
Lasgo's new single, Surrender, is out tomorrow on Positiva

PICTURE: MARC LAGRANGE

Story: McCann Art: Rote

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